

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 6352

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP, PFOR, GR, CY

SUBJECT: CODEL EAGLETON: VISIT TO ATHENS

1. SENATOR EAGLETON, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT BRIAN ATWOOD, MADE A THREE-DAY VISIT TO GREECE AUGUST 18-20. THE SENATOR WAS GIVEN A WARM WELCOME BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AND THE GREEK PRESS.

2. THE SENATOR'S SCHEDULE INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS, DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF, CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES (CU/NF) LEADER MAVROS, AND CU/NF DEPUTY VIRGINIA TSOUDEROS. THE SENATOR ALSO MET A NUMBER OF OTHER GREEKS AT SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS.

(AN APPOINTMENT WAS REQUESTED WITH PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU WHO REPLIED HE WOULD BE OUT OF TOWN DURING THE SENATOR'S VISIT HERE.) SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL THE SENATOR WAS BRIEFED, TOGETHER WITH SENATOR PELL, BY THE DCM AND THE COUNTRY TEAM. BOTH SENATORS MET WITH THE AMBASSADOR BEFORE THEY CALLED, SEPARATELY, ON THE PRIME MINISTER. THE SENATOR HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE END OF HIS VISIT (SEPTEL). HE ALSO MET WITH AMERICAN MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY STAFF FOR A GENERAL DISCUSSION.

3. BEFORE DEPARTING ATHENS SENATOR EAGLETON INDICATED TO US THAT HE CONSIDERED HIS VISIT TO
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ATHENS AS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. THE SENATOR WAS MOST

FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS WHOM HE CONSIDERS TO BE AN OUTSTANDING POLITICAL LEADER AND STATESMAN. DURING THEIR HALF HOUR MEETING, IN WHICH MR. ATWOOD AND AMBASSADOR MOLYVIATES (DIRECTOR OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE) ALSO PARTICIPATED, THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE SENATOR THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. THE PRIME MINISTER INDICATED THAT IN THIS CONNECTION IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE U.S. PRESENCE IN GREECE NOT TO BE TOO LARGE. HE ALSO TOLD THE SENATOR THAT LEFTIST ELEMENTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT CONTROVERSY OVER BASES ON CRETE (ATHENS 6189).

4. ON THE QUESTION OF CYPRUS, THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR TO THE SENATOR THAT THE TWO KEY ISSUES IN A SETTLEMENT WERE THE TERRITORIAL ONE AND THE RESETTLEMENT OF THE REFUGEES. IF AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON A SATISFACTORY PERCENTAGE OF THE TERRITORY FOR THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS AND ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE FOR THE RETURN OF REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMES, THE QUESTION OF THE POWERS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT COULD THEN BE RESOLVED RELATIVELY EASILY.

5. IN HIS MEETING WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTER, AVEROFF TOLD THE SENATOR THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE WAR WITH TURKEY WAS A PROBABILITY ALTHOUGH IT COULD NOT BE COMPLETELY RULED OUT. IN ANY CASE, THE GREEKS WOULD NOT TAKE ANY AGGRESSIVE ACTION AND WERE INTERESTED IN FINDING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE VARIOUS ISSUES BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR CYPRUS. AVEROFF EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR GREECE TO MAINTAIN A STRONG DEFENSIVE POSITION AS A DETERENT TO ANY POSSIBLE TURKISH ADVENTURES. FOR THIS REASON HE HAD REQUESTED ADDITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. INCLUDING THE RESUMPTION OF GRANT AID.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THE SENATOR'S QUESTION THE DEFENSE MINISTER INDICATED THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THE

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GOVERNMENT COULD NOW DEPEND ON THE RELIABILITY OF THE ARMED FORCES, WHICH WERE LOYAL AND DISCIPLINED. THERE WERE STILL SOME INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARMY WITH PRO-JUNTIST SYMPATHIES BUT AVEROFF SAID HE KNEW WHO THEY WERE AND WAS CAPABLE OF CONTROLLING THEM. KUBISCH

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